Doc is in: Emrick not slowing down in his dream job

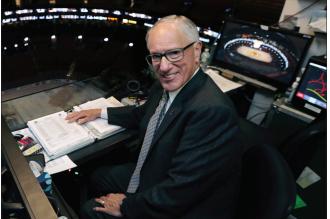
By STEPHEN WHYNO Associated Press

BOSTON — The Boston Bruins and St. Louis Blues' morning skates are over and a handful of broadcasters have taken the ice to re-enact a play from this bruising Stanley Cup Final.

In the otherwise empty stands is a singular figure having a good chuckle at the retired players doing their best to go over the Xs and Os.

But Mike Emrick doesn't sit still for long. It's a rare moment of pause for a man seemingly always in motion. A car comes to take him back to his hotel seven hours before Game 2 so he can get a quick change of clothes for his on-air work. Then it's back to work.

The man known as "Doc" because he has a doctorate in broadcasting is working the 21st Stanley Cup Final of his illustrious career. He has been honored by the Hockey Hall of Fame and is the voice of the sport in America, a rapid-fire storyteller who is beloved from the Shark Tank to Madison Square Garden. Colleague Kenny Albert calls him the Vin Scully of hockey,



AP Photo/Charles Krupa, File

In this May 29, 2019, file photo, NBC hockey broadcaster Mike Emrick poses for a photo while preparing to call Game 2 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup Final between the St. Louis Blues and the Boston Bruins in Boston.

and the admiration level in hockey circles is just as great.

At 72, still calling games on the NHL's biggest stage, Emrick is in his prime and showing no signs of slowing down or stepping away from broadcasting the fastest game on ice.

"I really wanted to do it from the time I saw my first game, but a lot of people really want to do something and they don't get to," Emrick said. "When you have a job like that, you're never working the rest of your life. So it's been 46

years. I don't know when it'll end. God only knows."

Emrick is so enthusiastic on the air during games that New York Rangers president John Davidson wonders when his former broadcast partner is going to come up for air. Not during the most important time of year for Emrick. This love affair goes back a ways, to when he was a kid sitting at Fort Wayne (Indiana) Komets games, practicing calls in the corner on Wednesday afternoons with his reel-toreel, battery-operated tape recorder from the music

store his dad owned.

Down time for Emrick comes mostly in the summer when he and Joyce, his wife of almost 41 years, go on camping trips to small towns, mostly in Michigan or visit his brother and stepmother who still live in his Indiana hometown. He does like to watch his beloved Pittsburgh Pirates. During the season, they like going to lunch and at night sit together in the living room with their two dogs Joybells and Liberty - he's watching hockey and she's watching veterinarian shows.

That's a nice night for us," Emrick says. "It's probably not a life many people would find really exciting, but we enjoy it."

Joyce and dogs are the centerpieces of Emrick's universe that has plenty of room for the people who consider themselves lucky to call him a friend. That includes broadcast partners of various vintages - Eddie Olczyk, Glenn "Chico" Resch, Bill Clement and Davidson. He has helped many through difficult times by listening or simply lighting a candle in church for them.

"Just the support part

of it from Doc is what is the most important thing," said Olczyk, who leaned on Emrick when he was battling cancer. "He doesn't even have to say anything, but if you just get a text or a picture or whatever, you know he's thinking about you. Having been through it himself, that's what friends do. I look at Doc as a friend."

Emrick is 28 years removed from prostate cancer. He got the call from Hershey Medical Center on a Friday night while he was on the road in Montreal doing play by play for the Philadelphia Flyers. He waited two days to tell Joyce in person — saying she was going to need to be a rock because he didn't know what to expect — but right away he told Clement, who considers Emrick as close as a brother.

Clement's admiration for Emrick as a broadcaster rivals only that for Doc the human being.

"When you listen to him on the air or see him on the air, he's a real person," Clement said. "He's a real person with an unbelievable gift that he grew himself to describe and to use the English language."

Ah yes, Emrick's style.

Hockey moves fast and all of its play-by-play announcers need to keep up. Doc loves his verbs — one fan famously counted 153 used in one game — and finding fun or interesting ways to describe the action. A pass isn't just a pass to Emrick - the puck was squibbed, rifled, wanded, even soccered and the puck isn't just stopped by a goaltender, it's waffleboarded, gloved or sticked away. Goals usually get a big "And he scorrrrrrrrrres!" from Emrick to match the moment and his deep knowledge of the game allows him to get just as excited by the little things that can turn a game - a puck ringing off a post, an a oh-so-close pass, a jaw-dropping save.

"Doc pushes himself to reinvent things and to be the best and to try new things and be different and yet not be a caricature," Clement said.

Never is he off the rails. No less an admirer than the late Frank DeFord described Emrick as "a connoisseur" whose eloquence is somehow the perfect balance for the frantic, scrambling nature of hockey.

Baseball: Ashlee Hodgen Memorial Tournament to return for its fourth year



Continued from Page B1

lee Hodgen Scholarship fund - an award given to selected Pendleton baseball and softball athletes, and one student from Echo High School every year.

"We want to keep her name alive," Zander said. "She did a lot for Pendleton baseball.'

This year is Mike Hodgen's 44th as an assistant coach for Hodgen Distributing, and Zander's 19th. Wes Armstrong is entering his fourth season as the team's head coach.

Several players on the Hodgen Distributing roster are coming off a historic season on Pendleton's varsity team. The Bucks finished with an 18-9 overall record and a slew of accomplishments, including taking the top spot in the Intermountain Conference and playing in the 5A state championship game in Keizer, where they fell 11-4 to the Central Panthers. It was their first title game appearance since 1992.

And for those players, summer ball is a means to improve their game before the next varsity season rolls around.

"For myself and most of my team, summer ball is a way to work on stuff that we didn't get to polish (with the Bucks)," said Field, Pendleton's sophomore third baseman. "I want to work on my pitching. I feel like that could be a strong suit of mine if I keep working at it."

Hodgen Distributing will kick off their season with a tournament game against the La Grande Legacy Legends on Friday at 3:30 p.m. at Bob White Field. On Saturday, they'll face Clark County's Hammertime at 12:30 p.m., followed by a game against Hermiston at 8 p.m.

From then on, the traveling tournament team will play a game every weekend until July 18.

We've got a lot of hard chargers out here," Field said of his summer team. "These kids just want to play ball. That's why they're here.'

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Staff photo by Kathy Aney, File

Hodgen Distributing's Kyle Field starts a slide into second base as the ball passes him during the first game of last year's Ashlee Hodgen Memorial Tournament against Baker.

All-State: Players selected

Continued from Page B2

Special District 5 selection at pitcher and as infielder. Corvaran rubia was a first-team outfielder.

Henrichs finished the season with a 1.42 ERA, striking out 89 and walking just 20 in 53 innings of work. His record was 10-0. He also hit .478, including 12 doubles and 29 RBIs. He also led the team with 25 stolen bases. Covarrubia, the Knights' lead-off hitter, had a .364 batting average. He drove in 15 runs, scored 33 runs, and had

21 stolen bases. The TigerScots sent four players to the series in 2014, and catcher Vince Roff was the last to

go in 2016. Sater is a first-team allleague selection for Special District 7, and was named to the 2A/1A allstate third team.

He hit .500, with 41 hits, 22 RBIs and 28 runs scored. He also had 12 stolen bases and just two errors.

"He was a three-year starter for us," W-M coach Corey Thacker said. "He worked his tail off to get where he's at. I was more than happy with his leadership of the team this season.'

NCAA DIVISION I BASEBALL **REGIONALS GLANCE** All Times PDT Double Elimination: x-if necessary At Monongalia County Ballpark Morgantown, W.Va. Friday, May 31 Duke 8, Texas A&M 5 West Virginia 6, Fordham 2 Saturday, June 1 Texas A&M 11, Fordham 2, Fordham eliminated Duke 4, West Virginia 0 Sunday, June 2 Texas A&M 11, West Virginia 10, WVU eliminated Duke 4, Texas A&M 1, Duke advances At Boshamer Stadium Chapel Hill, N.C. Friday, May 31 North Carolina 7, UNC Wilmington 6 Liberty 6, Tennessee Saturday, June 1 Tennessee 10, UNC Wilmington 3, UNCW eliminated North Carolina 16, Liberty 1 Sunday, June 2 Tennessee 6, Liberty 5, 10 innings, Liberty eliminated North Carolina 5, Tennessee 2, UNC advances At Clarke-LeClair Stadium Greenville, N.C. Saturday, June 1 Campbell 5, N.C. State 4 Quinnipiac 5, East Carolina 4 Sunday, June 2 East Carolina 9, N.C. State 2, NCSU eliminated Campbell 9, Ouinnipiac 8 East Carolina 13, Quinnipiac 2, Quinnip iac eliminated Monday, June 3 East Carolina 10, Campbell 3 East Carolina 12, Campbell 3, East Carolina advances **At Jim Patterson Stadium** Louisville, Ky. Friday, May 31 Illinois State 8, Indiana 7 Louisville 5, UIC 3 Saturday, June 1 Indiana 9, UIC 5, UIC eliminated Illinois State 4, Louisville 2 Sunday, June 2 Louisville 9, Indiana 7, IU eliminated Louisville 11, Illinois State 2 Monday, June 3 Louisville 4, Illinois State 3, Louisville advances **At Foley Field** Athens, Ga. Friday, May 31 Florida State 13, FAU 7 Georgia 13, Mercer 3 Saturday, June 1 FAU 10, Mercer 6, Mercer eliminated Florida State 12, Georgia 3 Sunday, June 2 Georgia 13, FAU 0, FAU eliminated Florida State 10, Georgia 1, FSU advances

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